

AMBS

alumni news

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Biblical faith is wary of confining divine presence too closely to one place or building, land or sanctuary, race or nation. Faithful people are repeatedly and providentially called to go elsewhere, be displaced, meet—even be—strangers, all in order to encounter our Creator more fully.

Arthur Paul Boers (MAPS 1983, former faculty) wrote these words in *The Way is Made by Walking*. This issue reports on a student body from many denominations, guests from other continents, alumni at work in many places and languages. There are also cautionary words: Are we eager to participate in conversations and friendships that will foster this gift of diversity?

I remember how my views of God expanded during my service term in Zambia. I was called to teach English to pastors, business persons and Congolese university students in the Kimbanguist church and African Initiated Church. The only affordable English language books were Good News Bibles, so we read together the Gospel of John. My neighbors modeled contentment without shopping, gratitude for food for this day, diligent prayer in times of trouble. I learned to worship God more fully from these faithful friends.

May we encounter our Creator more fully through strangers among us.

—Rhoda Schrag, Alumni Association president

Anabaptist, yes; and also more

The AMBS vision statement sets an ambitious goal: “AMBS will become an Anabaptist learning community that makes theological education accessible to and welcoming of Christians of increasingly diverse traditions, ethnicities and races to reflect more fully God’s purposes of unity and justice.” We asked several graduates how they experienced the seminary, and how we are doing at “welcoming Christians of increasingly diverse traditions.”

Jeff Boyd, MAPS 2012

Even though I was excited to finish my MA in Peace Studies and graduate this past May, I knew I would miss the AMBS learning community. And I was right. Facebook and email help keep some connections, but they’re just not the same as sitting by the fireplace in the lounge talking about classes, questions and the simple things of life.

Before starting at AMBS, I presumed I would be one of the only students who wasn’t Mennonite, but quickly it became clear that a number of students were also from other faith traditions. Course work was presented from an Anabaptist perspective, but diverse opinions and questions were welcomed in class discussions. I was surprised to find professors even encouraging me to locate themes of peace and justice within my own Seventh-day Adventist background. Because of this open and inclusive

environment, I not only gained a deeper understanding of Anabaptist perspectives on God’s peace in the world, but also learned how Adventism is situated in the Radical Reformation and the Anabaptist experience.

I greatly appreciate that AMBS has developed partnerships with other institutions—SCUPE, Garret-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Andrews University. Through Andrews, I was able to study in Kenya and Italy, in addition to the month-long course in Guatemala offered by AMBS. This added a rich international flavor to my peace studies, helping to bring the academic process directly into God’s beautiful but hurting world.

Looking back, I’m thankful for the professors and fellow students who journeyed with me through my three years at AMBS. It was a challenging but deeply rewarding time, and I’m thankful God led me to the AMBS community. (Continued on page 2)



Jeff Boyd as a student pictured with Brittany McGraw and Naomi Wenger.

Nominations open for Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition

Who do you know with a compelling story of serving God and the church? Who do you know who is involved in ministry from which the rest of us can learn?

We are asking for nominations for the annual alumni recognition, so think about graduates currently in ministry who are making notable contributions in their settings. The Alumni Executive Committee wants to recognize not only those who have given a lifetime to the church, but also wants to recognize a wider diversity of people and forms of ministry.

In 2013, two graduates will be selected for the honor, so the recognition can go to younger and older graduates, men and women, and people from different ethnic groups and settings. Those who are selected will be invited to come to AMBS in Elkhart to share with students what inspires and sustains them in their ministry.

To nominate graduates, download a form from the AMBS website: www.amsb.edu/alumni/Ministry-and-Service-Award.cfm

Nominations are due to Bob Rosa, alumni director, by January 1. Please keep in mind that graduates of Goshen Biblical Seminary, Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary are eligible for the recognition. ●

Housing survey: What we learned

Auditing classes, attending chapel, using the library and volunteering are what respondents said they are interested in—if AMBS offers retirement housing on campus.

The survey conducted in spring tested interest in alumni joining the AMBS community in their retirement; 176 alumni responded. Of these, almost one-third expressed interest in living on campus, and most of those wanted AMBS retirement housing to be affiliated with a local retirement community.

Currently AMBS administrators are beginning to plan for fund-raising for new campus housing (along with student aid and faculty support). Keep in touch with AMBS for your opportunities to support this effort and to follow further testing for offering retirement housing on campus. ●

Anabaptist, yes; and also more

(continued from page 1)



Lori Durbin, MDiv 2009

I had grown up in the Presbyterian Church. I left the church, enrolled in AMBS, and joined the United Methodist church all within a six month time period.

There were definite advantages and some disadvantages going to a Mennonite seminary. The benefits far out-weighed the disadvantages. However, there were some areas of seminary life at AMBS I felt out of place and awkward.

The first place I noticed feeling like I did not belong was the chapel services. I had been long removed from hymn singing, and many of the Mennonite tunes were not familiar. Contemporary music seemed to be frowned on. I felt very out of place during worship and the sermon messages often had themes that were unfamiliar to me. By the end of my first year I had gotten used to the Mennonite hymns and the way of the chapel services. By the time I graduated I felt as though I belonged.

The other place I felt as though I did not belong was during breaks and lunch. Not having been involved in the Mennonite Church made conversation difficult. This is the one area during my seminary years that I was uncomfortable the entire time at AMBS. I found myself choosing other places to eat lunch because of feeling left out of table conversations.

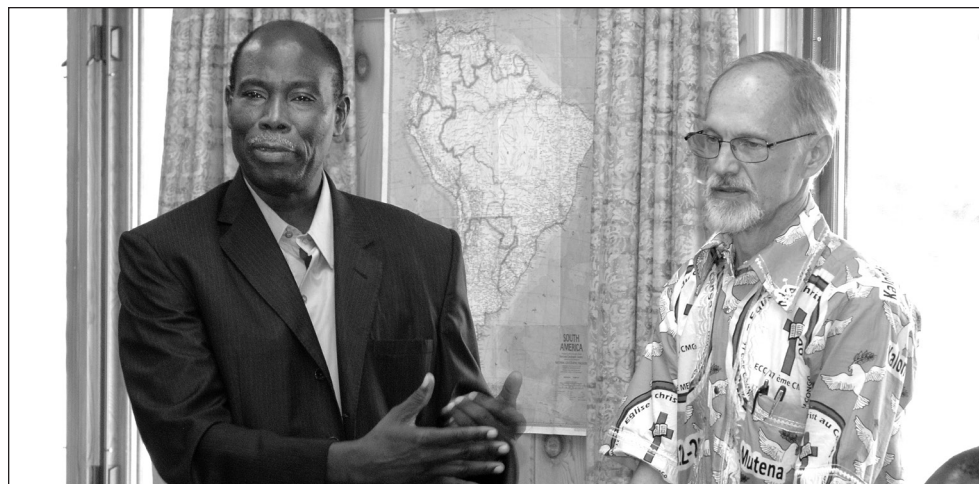
Overall, the experiences I had at AMBS were mostly positive and I will carry the time I had at AMBS into my future ministry.

15 denominations plus Mennonite

Fifteen denominations, in addition to several Mennonite groups, are represented in this year's student body.

Thirty-two students come from the 15 other-than-Mennonite groups, including Baptist, Church of the Brethren, United Methodist, Christian Reformed and Evangelical Friends. Sixty-five students, or about two-thirds of the student body, come from four different Mennonite groups.

A new partnership with Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill., allows United Methodist students to earn an MDiv at AMBS, taking five core courses from G-ETS. Seven UM students in the MDiv program are taking advantage of this new arrangement. ●



Pastor Siaka Traore, Vice President of the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission International Central Council and President of the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso, was a guest of AMBS in late September. Rodney Hollinger-Janzen (MDiv 1990) served as a translator for Pastor Traore and Pastor Benjamin Mubenga, President of AIMM's International Central Council, and President of the Evangelical Mennonite Church in Congo. The visit coincided with the release of The Jesus Tribe: Grace stories from Congo's Mennonites, 1912-2012. Read about The Jesus Tribe and Rodney's story of how the book came to be at www.amsb.edu/news/Congo-stories-will-encourage-and-challenge.cfm

ALUMNI NEWS NOTES

Catherine Koziatek (MDiv 2004) is senior pastor of Albright United Methodist Church, Mishawaka, Ind. The congregation has two Sunday services and activities during the week that include a preschool and community food pantry.

Samantha Lioi (MDiv 2010) is Peace and Justice Minister for Eastern District and Franconia Mennonite Conferences. This role is a resource to congregations in a deeper witness of "shalom."

Mark Jantzen (MATS 1993) has been promoted to professor of history at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Lowell Gerber (MDiv 1980), Lititz, Pa., is transitional pastor at New Danville Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Hilary Scarsella (MDiv 2012) is Transformative Peacemaking and Communications Associate for Mennonite Church USA. On Sept. 1 she married Sam Jerome.

Andy Alexis-Baker (MATS 2007) published an essay, "What about the Centurion? A Roman Soldier's Faith and Christian Pacifism," in *A Faith Not Worth Fighting For: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Nonviolence*, Cascade Books, 2012. He is general editor of the Peaceable Kingdom Series, in which this volume appears.

Jane A. Miller (MDiv 2005) was ordained on May 20, 2012, at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church for her work as hospice chaplain, spiritual director and pastoral counselor.

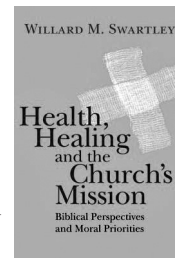
Paul Leichty (MDiv 1982) is executive director of Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship. He continues as director of user services for Mennonite.net and executive director of Congregational Accessibility Network.

John A. Esau (BD 1962) has completed 24 years of writing columns for *Mennonite Weekly Review* (now *Mennonite World Review*).

John M. Drescher (BD 1954) revised *Seven things children need*, now in 20 languages, to be published this fall by MennoMedia. He continues to serve as campus pastor for Quakertown Christian School (preschool through high school) and writes a weekly column to parents.

John A. Braun (MDiv 1971) is executive director of THARS International (Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services). The organization is a partner to THARS (Burundi), to provide healing, reconciliation and empowerment for clients in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. Support also includes funding and work camps to build a training and retreat center in Gitega, Burundi.

Willard Swartley, (BD 1962, professor emeritus) is author of *Health, Healing and the Church's Mission: Biblical Perspectives and Moral Priorities*, published by IVP Academic. One reviewer writes, "Swartley engages Scripture, Christian history and mission, and the vexatious problems associated with health care in our own context to offer sober, mature and constructive treatment of a critical issue." ●



AMBS notes

Nate Koets, director of maintenance, has taken the position of director of facilities for Concord Community Schools.

Cheryl Zehr began on August 30 as administrative assistant for the Church Leadership Center. Vicky Scott most recently was in this position.

Brenna Harker is admissions counselor. Her husband, Ryan, is a new AMBS student this fall.

The new AMBS website offers resources for everyone, not just students and not just pastors. Visit www.amsb.edu and select *Alumni, Friends and Donors*, or *Pastors and Leaders*. You will find links to the AMBS library, calendar of events, new publications, opportunities to donate, and more.

New series of online classes

The AMBS Church Leadership Center is initiating a new resource this winter and spring: a series of short online, non-credit courses in issues related to Anabaptism.

These six-week courses will explore Anabaptist history, thought and witness. They do not earn the student seminary credit, but the readings and discussion are on a graduate level, comparable to seminary classes. They are intended for new Anabaptists and people seeking to deepen their ministry in the way of Jesus.

Lois Barrett and Loren Johns will teach the first two Anabaptist Short Courses, beginning February 11 and April 8. Learn about these courses at www.amsb.edu/churchleadershipcenter/Anabaptist-short-courses.cfm



Margaret and Daniel Schipani stand next to a new sculpture, Misseo Dei, that calls worshippers to be engaged in the world as they gather for services in the Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount. It represents the full circle of God's mission in multiple generations of one family.

Missio Dei calls us into the world

The story of several generations of a family is circular, reflected in the sculpture that now stands outside the chapel of the Sermon on the Mount.

Doris Snyder Wydman, and her husband, Perry Wydman, commissioned the sculpture in memory of Doris's first husband, Clifford, who died at sea as the family was enroute to Argentina. The sculpture

also honors Doris's son-in-law, Daniel Schipani, MAR 1974 and professor of pastoral care and counseling. Daniel grew up in Argentina and came to the U.S. for study. He not only teaches at AMBS, but also teaches and lectures in many other locations in North America, South America and Europe.

The piece was created by Goshen sculptor John Mishler.



AMBS Alumni News

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A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

Now Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

The new AMBS name, "signals a pivotal moment for a deep reclaiming of our mission to educate followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world," Sara Wenger Shenk said on August 28, when the change occurred.

Sara named four ways in which the seminary provides opportunities for people to grow to become trustworthy leaders of communities of shalom:

- to be deeply formed by the biblical story, becoming interpreters who can proclaim the biblical story with Christ as "the center of gravity";
- to become fluent in the language of faith—theology, able to talk clearly and persuasively about what we believe and why;
- to be astute discerners of culture who can guide discernment around difficult issues; and

- to grow in spiritual maturity, willing to be honest with our longings, failures, and joys.

These qualities are weakening in many of our faith communities which makes the mission of an Anabaptist biblical seminary ever more critically important, Sara said.

The day began with an early morning prayer service. Gathering outdoors, 23 faculty, staff and students shared Scriptures that have been encouraging during times of transition and change.

A "birth day" party in the afternoon introduced the seminary's new visual identity. The logo comprises a triad graphic and the four initials of our name. The triad reflects themes of worship, community, trinitarian faith, gathering to learn and reaching out to witness and serve ; and it refreshes some of the elements of the previous "people of the Book" logo. ●



AMBS students and employees, and friends from the Mennonite Offices—who did not need to be in class or at their desks—donned t-shirts with the new logo and gathered in front of the chapel to show off the new name of AMBS on August 28.

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